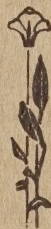




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HURONIA

By
COLONEL ALEXANDER FRASER, LL.D., A.D.C.
TORONTO




1922

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BY
WILLIAM ALFRED FRANK, LL.D.

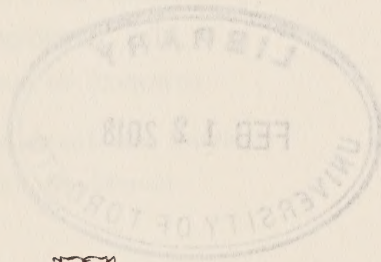
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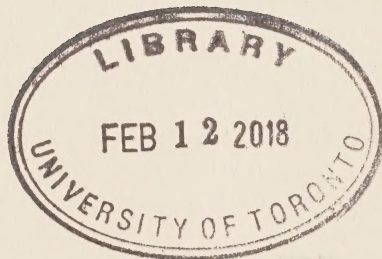
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TORONTO



Dedicated
as a token of sincere affection
and esteem
to

THE MOST REVEREND
NEIL McNEIL, D.D.,
ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO.

A Scholarly, Beneficent and Patriotic
Christian Gentleman.



REV. JEAN DE BREBEUF, S.J.
MISSIONARY TO THE HURONS.

Ad Majoram gloriam Dei: For the Glory of God

Huron^{*}ia

By COLONEL ALEXANDER FRASER, LL.D.,
TORONTO

HISTORY, whether sacred or secular, has her consecrated shrines,—mayhap, her hallowed hiding-places to which are dedicated vital and immortal pages. They may not lie on the broad pathway of affairs, or command the attention of him who runs. Rather are they sought and found in the solitary place, in the peaceful resort of reflection where, to the discerning mind of the scholar or the poet, the deep as well as the fine things of life are sometimes revealed. On one of those spots we have alighted. From its hidden well-springs we have been refreshed and inspired with a lively sense of the significance of an imperishable saga, bequeathed to us and to future ages.

The scene of our story is still all but unknown to the world, nor is a knowledge of the events themselves widely diffused. Yet in this place, in the Huronia of the seventeenth century, were to be found daring adventure and heroic achievement, rare in the wide world, the glory of which will never fade; and to-day we are privileged, as well as justified, in recalling that past, in drawing attention anew to its wonderful story and in suggesting some lessons from it, applicable to our own time and people.

Huronia, strictly speaking, was a comparatively small district, comprising the five townships of Tiny, Tay, Flos, Medonte and Orillia, in the County of Simcoe, but the operations of the mission extended beyond this restricted area to the Petuns of the west, the Neutrals of the south, to some of the

*Address delivered at the Tercentenary Celebration of the Mission to the Huron Indians, at Penetanguishene, Ontario, 1921.

friendly Algonquins and to Indian tribes occupying the peninsula beyond the Grand River. The influence of the mission also reached the Nipissings, the Mississaugas, the Beavers (Amikwas) to the east and north-east of Huronia. This larger field was an important territory lying near the heart of a vast, new country, accessible from the seaboard by a choice of water routes and occupied by an organized and powerful people.

The inter-relationship of those tribes is an interesting ethnological study which lies outside the scope of this paper, but one opinion may be referred to. Because of the similarity of their languages, divided mainly by dialectic differences, the Hurons were thought to be the parent stock, "from which sprang all the branches of the great Iroquoian family whether included in the primitive confederation of the Five Nations or standing apart territorially, within historic times, as did the Tuskaroras, the Cherokees and the Andastes." Whether or not this view may be safely accepted—language alone often being a doubtful guide—there can be no question that the Huron-Iroquois Indians ranked as one of the three great, determining, aboriginal families, each having a generic language, who claimed inherent racial rights of superiority in the soil now known as the eastern half of Canada. Of the habits of the Huron-Iroquois, the causes of their political separation and subsequent implacable hostility, much speculation but little or no certain knowledge exists.

The Hurons entertained definite ideas of government, of a character which might be termed republican in form but excessively and impracticably democratic. They usually lived in substantially built houses, grouped together in villages, twenty of which, according to Brebeuf (1636), contained about thirty thousand souls, or an average of fifteen hundred each. Each village had its council of elders who met almost daily and decided village business. The meetings were open to the villagers, who had a right to take part in the debates, but the decision lay with the elders. Above the village or town-meeting there was a general assembly for the government of the whole tribe or nation, and beyond that an Assem-

bly or Council for the confederacy of allied nations. Their administration was two-fold. One branch dealt with all matters of what we would call civil government; the other exclusively with war. Peace-time affairs were conducted by chiefs who did not lead in war, and war was conducted by chiefs selected for that purpose alone. Bressani (1653) has this interesting statement: "The Hurons have neither king nor absolute prince, but certain chiefs, like the heads of a republic, whom we call captains, different, however, from those in war. They hold office commonly by succession on the side of the women, but sometimes by election. They assume office at the death of a predecessor, who, they say, are resuscitated in them. . . . These captains have no coercitive power . . . and obtain obedience by their eloquence, exhortation and entreaties."

The weak point was the absence of "coercitive power"—the power to enforce the enactments of the assembly or council. This condition arose from the reluctance of the Huron to surrender the personal freedom under which he claimed to do pretty much as he pleased.

Lalemant says: "I do not believe there is any people on earth freer than they, and less able to allow the subjection of their wills to any power whatever, so much so that fathers have no control over their children, or captains over their subjects, or the laws of the country over any of them, except so far as each is pleased to submit them."

In short, the people were lawless, not because there were no laws, but because the individual placed personal freedom above the law. Personal influence, won by eloquence or savage bravery, commanded admiration and respect and was the determining factor in government.

The Huron religion was a low form of paganism, suggesting decadence, in the course of ages, from a higher conception of life and a clearer idea of death. The united testimony of all who had an opportunity of observing their habits is that the Huron Indians were practically devoid of moral virtue, and that they exemplified, with scarcely any modification, the evil tendencies characteristic of debased savagery. Of a re-

more civilization traces still remained. Tillage was understood, handicraft developed, and a fair measure of prosperity was enjoyed. They kept their tribal friendships in good faith, the claims of hospitality were honoured rather above the standard of their contemporaries nor was the courage of their blood lacking in war, though often misdirected by wild impulse and dishonoured by cruel barbarities.

The Indians who could speak the Huron language were estimated by Brebeuf to number about 300,000 souls, of whom about 30,000 occupied Huronia. In a letter to Cardinal Richelieu, dated 1646, Father Jerome Lalemant reports a reduction by war, famine and disease to about 10,000, so disastrous were the incursions of the Iroquois and the misfortunes which followed in their train. These numbers are likely to have been an over-estimate.

This, then, was the field and such the people to which Champlain directed the attention of the Church, as urgently and hopefully calling for missionary effort.

The adventurous explorer was sometimes either a religious enthusiast or a solid, quietly-devout son of the Church. Cartier raised the Cross on the headland at Gaspé, when he landed there, and claimed the new country for his sovereign, the King of France. The religious ceremonies, on his departure for Canada in the following year, of which the High Mass, the Holy Sacrament, and the episcopal benediction were so lovingly recorded, were in accord with the custom of the time and characteristic of all Catholic countries. Later on, this same year, at Hochelaga, Cartier read a chapter from the Gospel over the prostrate form of a crippled Indian chief and the sick of his tribe. Religious duties were observed amid the sickness and hardships of his first gloomy winter at Stadacona. Aymer de Chaste was even more zealous. To him the evangelization of the Indian was of greater value and more to be desired than the coveted fur-trade. His lieutenant and representative, Champlain, was no less truly pious and shared equally with him a high sense of patriotic duty. It is unnecessary to multiply examples; it may be taken for granted that missionary enterprise entered largely and seriously into



REV. GABRIEL LALEMANT, S. J.
MISSIONARY TO THE HURONS.

sixteenth century projects, whose main purpose was colonization, commerce, and the acquisition of new territory.

One reason for this has been suggested, viz., the personal character of the explorers and of their chief backers in France, among whom were noblemen and women of high standing and influence. Another reason, that may be mentioned, was the powerful position occupied by the Church in public affairs, combined with a lingering respect for the traditional policy of the Vatican, echoing a past when kings were made and unmade, when kingdoms were bestowed and royal titles annulled or confirmed; a time when the Pope effectively exercised a spiritual mandatory over lands and peoples which still might be considered a popular buttress in disputed claims of right by discovery.

Champlain's appeal naturally did not fall, therefore, on deaf ears, and before returning to Canada in 1615, he made arrangements, with the concurrence and authority of the Pope, to bring out with him four members of the branch of the Franciscan Order known as Recollets. They were Joseph Le Caron, Denis Jamay, Jean d'Olbeau and Pacifique Duplessis. This was the first Christian mission to Canada. No doubt there were missionaries before this time in the part of Nova Scotia then known as Acadia, and two chaplains were attached to Cartier's second voyage in 1535. But the Recollets brought by Champlain came as a constituted mission to occupy new territory permanently, and as such the names of its members deserve to be held in honour as real pioneers of the faith. They embarked at Honfleur on the 24th of April, 1615, reaching Tadousac on the 25th of May and Quebec a few days later. At a conference with Champlain the missionaries were assigned to their several fields; Father Le Caron, at his own request, being given the distant and unexplored region of Huronia. He set out from Quebec for his field of labour early in July and, travelling by the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, Lake Nipissing, French River, Byng Inlet and Parry Sound and through the thousands of beautiful islands in Georgian Bay, he ended his long and wonderful journey in safety. With Le Caron were twelve Frenchmen, to protect him in the

event of danger from hostile Indians. Le Caron was warmly welcomed by the hospitably-inclined Hurons, who insisted that he should share with them the best accommodation in their village, which was named "Carhagouha."

As the relator puts it: "The Hurons, wishing to show Father Joseph the joy they felt at his coming, offered to receive him in their common lodges. He represented to them that, having to confer with God on affairs of importance concerning the welfare of their nation, these weighty matters deserved to be dealt with more respectfully in solitude and retreat, far from domestic turmoil and the bustle of every-day life. They heeded his remonstrances and with poles and strips of bark built him a cabin apart from the village."

"Therein," says Le Clercq, "he raised an altar that he might offer to God the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and give himself over to his spiritual exercises." The first step had thus been taken to sow the good seed on this thorny, virgin soil.

Leaving Quebec on the 9th of July, Champlain, accompanied by two Frenchmen and seven Indians, and travelling over the same route as that taken by Le Caron, landed at Otonacha on the first of August. Next day he visited Carmaron and on the third day, Ossossane, from which point he visited Le Caron at Carhagouha. The village, Champlain tells us, was enclosed in a triple palisade of wood, thirty-five feet in height. The meeting of Champlain and Le Caron at the little dwelling house must have been as affecting as it was suggestive and hopeful to those men of vision and far-reaching ideals. It took place on the 12th of August, 1615, the day on which the first Mass was celebrated in Upper Canada and in the parish now known as Lafontaine, within the bounds of the diocese of Toronto. The scene had a grandeur all its own. No doubt the High Mass and the bishop's blessing at St. Malo, performed in the correct and elaborate ritual of the church, were enduringly impressive to explorers leaving their native shores to face unknown dangers in the far west. But the humble cabin, the lowly altar, the open canopy of the heavens appeared immeasurably sublime to the

boundless faith of the consecrated missionary who had placed his trust in the unseen Power, rather than in the splendour of the seen. As we proceed, we shall find that this was also characteristic of Le Caron's successors in the Huron mission. Each and all of them had marvellous faith in God—the faith that would remove mountains, neither blind nor credulous, but well-grounded and triumphant over their severest trials and most cruel tortures. In that fact lay their sustaining power which raised them above physical suffering to an exaltation of soul far beyond the average human understanding.

To a brave mind the prospects in Huronia were inspiring. In Vaughan's recent biography of Sir William Vanhorne, we find the dominating motive of his life, the great incentive by which he was animated, to be the joy of grappling with and overcoming difficulties which might seem, even to a great man, to be insuperable. In the faith that he could conquer lay the secret of his power and success. Likewise with the Huron missionaries, with this radical difference, they believed, not in themselves, lion-hearted though they were, but in the divine power and in the divine promise. On such surety their faith could not be, and was not, in vain. So Le Caron regarded his birch-bark cabin, constructed by willing Indian hands in the course of a passing hour, as a tabernacle in the wilderness; the prototype and precursor of temples in a land of promise, the possession of which was far off, but not in doubt.

Champlain rested at Carhagouha for a couple of days, and then passed on to Cahiague, to meet the Indian braves assembling for what proved to be the bootless expedition against the Iroquois in their own country, near Lake Canandaigua. On the way—the Trent valley system—they entered Lake Ontario, which Champlain named Lac St. Louis, a name by which it was known for a long period. Champlain was seriously wounded and the Hurons then abandoned the attack. Retreating homewards, they carried him with them back to Cahiague. He spent the Christmas season there, making a good recovery and then rejoined Le Caron early in the following month of January (1616). The two friends planned a visit to the Petuns, a neighbouring and friendly nation with whom

they remained about a month. They were not well received. The medicine-men saw their craft in danger and resented the intrusion of a new religion. The remainder of the winter was consequently spent by Le Caron at his own home, where he was engaged in the duties of his office and in acquiring the Huron language. In this he had considerable success, and was able, in a short time, to compile a small, useful dictionary which is now a relic of inestimable value. The advance he made in his work was gradual and chiefly of a preparatory character. Whilst not strikingly successful with respect to the number of converts made, it was, nevertheless, far from being unsatisfactory. Conditions were learned, the language acquired and the minds of the people disposed to listen favourably to the gospel message. Civilized modes of life were brought to their notice; the day of change had arrived. Harvest time was, in due course, to follow. With the opening of summer, the close of the first missionary visit had come, and throughout friendly relations had been maintained. This of itself was a good omen and Le Caron made the return journey to Quebec in peace of mind, reaching Three Rivers on the 15th of June, 1616.

An interval of seven years elapsed before Huronia was revisited by a missionary. Le Caron went to France and on his return in 1617, in company with Father Paul Huet, he succeeded Father Jamay as Superior and was stationed at Tadousac until 1623. Champlain once more took the lead and at his request Le Caron, Father Nicolas Viel, and a lay-brother, Gabriel Theodat Sagard (famous for his history) undertook the mission. Sagard wrote a long and interesting account of the journey by the Ottawa, Nipissing and French River the beaten route, "coming in sight," he says, "of the fresh water sea, crossing from island to island on its waters, they made the long-yearned-for country on a Sunday, the feast of St. Bernard, near noon, with the sun's rays falling perpendicularly." The feast of St. Bernard is held on the 20th of August, and in 1623 fell on a Sunday, so that Sagard's statement fixes the date of arrival.

Champlain had furnished eleven Frenchmen to help and to protect them; and two "donnes," or lay-brothers, accom-

panied them. At first the missionaries did not remain together. Le Caron naturally went to his old home at Carhagouha, while Father Viel resided at Toanche to the north and Sagard to the south at Ossossane. After a few months the two latter joined Le Caron at Carhagouha, which then became their headquarters. During the fall and winter, progress was made in the conversion of the Indians, several families having been won over and two adults baptized, a father and daughter, "of whom they felt more assured." They had perfected a dictionary of the Huron language and had organized the mission on what they hoped would be a permanent basis; a centre from which journeys would be made to the neighbouring nations, with Father Viel in charge, assisted by some of the Frenchmen who were to remain with him. Le Caron and Sagard thereupon returned to Quebec for necessary supplies. Here Sagard found instructions awaiting him to return to France, with which he at once complied. To his visit to Huronia we owe his very interesting history, the source of much important information concerning those early days. To Canada he did not again return, but with it his name is and will be indissolubly associated, especially with that part of Ontario of which he was par excellence the pioneer chronicler.

Le Caron was not able to re-visit Huronia. He carried on his duties in Quebec, and being the Acting Superior for Canada, kept in touch with the missions established by his Order at Tadousac and Gaspé for the Montagnais, at Miscou for the Micmacs, and at Three Rivers for the natives there. He eventually returned to France where, worn out by the hardships he had so willingly endured, he died in the year 1632, leaving a name indelibly imprinted on our religious history. The following extract from one of his letters raises the curtain on pioneer missionary experiences: "It would be difficult to tell you the fatigue I suffer, being obliged to have my paddle in my hand all day long, and run with all my strength with the Indians. I have more than a hundred times walked in the rivers over sharp rocks which cut my feet, in the mud, in the woods, where I carried the canoe and my little baggage, in order to avoid the rapids and the frightful water-falls. I say

nothing of the painful fast which beset us, having only a little sagamity, which is a kind of pulmentum, composed of water and the meal of Indian corn, a small quantity of which is dealt out to us morning and evening. Yet I must avow that, amid my pains, I felt much consolation. For, alas! when we see such a great number of infidels, and nothing but a drop of water is needed to make them children of God, one feels an ardour, which I cannot express, to labour for their conversion and to sacrifice for it one's repose and life." There we have an expression of the spirit of the true soldier of the Cross. Perhaps it may be the highest privilege of citizenship to endure in war the unspeakable hardships of mud, barbed wire and unsanitary trench, to face the dangers of the death-dealing barrage on behalf of home, freedom and right, but to the soldier-missionary who, for the salvation of an immortal soul, endures hardness, is due the highest possible human glory.

As I have stated, Father Viel remained behind in charge of the mission. He applied himself ardently to acquiring a practical knowledge of the Huron language and became proficient therein. His success in the matter of conversions was not, however, what he had expected and he wrote an imploring letter to Le Caron, still at Quebec, for more help. This appeal was sent on to France with an invitation to the Jesuits, who were better furnished than were the Recollets, with means for carrying forward a great missionary enterprise, to enter the field. Out of this came, in due course, the famous Jesuit Mission to the Huron Indians. Before entering on particulars, it is necessary to tell of the closing scenes of Father Viel's career. It was his heart's desire that he might be allowed to live and die in his mission in Huronia and his Superior had no other thought with respect to him; and so he laboured on until the spring of 1625, continuing to reside at Carhagouha, when he felt a desire to visit Quebec to avail himself of a short retreat there.

The journey thitherward proceeded in the usual uneventful manner until within the neighbourhood of Montreal. The canoe then entered the Riviere des Prairies and, instead of

portaging, shot a rapid in which it was capsized. The Indians swam to shore and saved themselves, but Father Viel and a young Indian neophyte, who accompanied him, were allowed to drown. There seems to be no doubt that this action had been preconcerted, for the Indians in the canoe were known to be unfriendly and, besides the fact that they had been able to swim ashore, they were also able to carry with them a part of Father Viel's belongings, but evidently made no attempt to rescue the missionary and his student, whose name was Auhaitsic. The rapid in which they were drowned has been known since as "Sault au Recollets." The name of the young Huron who thus shared his master's fate, has been commemorated by changing Lajeunesse's corners, near the village of Sault au Recollets, to Ahuntsic, a corruption of Auhaitsic. Viel's body was found and brought to Quebec for burial.

The appeal made to the Jesuits had already been favourably received, and the vanguard arrived at Quebec about the middle of June, 1625.

Champlain was not at first favourably inclined towards the Society of Jesus, regarding its members, as did other devout sons of the Church at that time, as being rather aggressive; perchance ambitious in the secular or civil ramifications of their undertakings. His preference rather leaned to the Franciscan Order. There could be no doubt as to the zeal of the Jesuits or as to the efficiency of their organization, and experience proved to Champlain that there could be no question as to the disinterestedness of their motives. So much was this the case latterly that he bequeathed part of his estate to them. That they interposed in political affairs when by so doing they believed the interests of the Church could best be served, they did not conceal or deny. With them, of course, the Church came first and other interests were subordinated. In those days the interests of Church and State were closely intertwined and action and interaction ought always to be interpreted in the spirit of their own age. The operations of the Jesuits in the mission fields of the world ought not to be excepted or excluded from the application of this general principle.

The most remarkable of the new Huron missionaries was Father Jean Brebeuf, the descendant of a noble family, a man of extraordinarily powerful physique, unbending determination and burning enthusiasm. He was accompanied by Father Anne de Noue, who had arrived at Quebec a year later than Brebeuf, and Father Joseph de la Roche d'Aillon, a Recollet. Father Charles Lalemant remained at Quebec as Superior-General of the Canada Missions (1625-1629) and Father Ennemond Masse was not assigned to Huronia. There was a delay of a year at Quebec, their first attempt to arrange for the journey proving a failure. Next year, 1626, a bargain was made and transportation, not without difficulty, was secured for the three missionaries, paid for in kind, the barter including strings of beads, knives, kettles, etc.; and Brebeuf, on account of his gigantic size was subjected to a blackmail of valuable presents in order to obtain the necessary accommodation in one of the canoes. They then set out about the end of July or beginning of August, and arriving at their destination, took up residence at Toanche, where they laboured together for a short time. Father D'Aillon received instructions to proceed to the Neutral Nation and, leaving his fellow-priests behind and accompanied by two Frenchmen and a few Indians, he travelled, the late Father Jones believed, through the counties of Grey and Wellington, southward, and then followed the course of the Grand River. The Neutrals occupied an extensive territory including both sides of Niagara River and northward to the lands of the Petuns. D'Aillon was the first Christian missionary to visit them and his visit lasted for about three months. He notes the milder climate of this southern field, the melting of the snow beginning towards the end of January and its disappearance early in March.

In the course of his wanderings, did he penetrate as far as Niagara River? Was he by any chance the first (unrecorded) European to gaze on the wonderful falls, half a century before Hennepin and the building of the "Griffon?" It would be surprising had he not gone as far as the great cataract of which he must have heard from the Indians.



REV. PAUL RAGUENEAU, S.J.
MISSIONARY TO THE HURONS.

The three missionaries were again together until June, when Father de Noue left for Quebec. He had found it impossible to learn the Huron language, a knowledge of which was essential in order to carry on. For another year Brebeuf and D'Aillon continued their work with varying success. Then, D'Aillon returned to Quebec, influenced in that step probably by the famine from which the country was suffering that year. Brebeuf remained another year, alone among Hurons, daunted neither by the dearth of provisions nor by the prospect of prolonged isolation by being cut off from communication with his friends. But in the midsummer of 1629 he was summoned by Father Masse, now acting as Superior, to Quebec. A crisis had arisen there. Kirke's ships blocked the St. Lawrence and the surrender of the town was demanded. This formal request he must obey, but he did so with sorrow. A strong tie of admiration bound the Indians to Brebeuf. They admired his enormous strength, his exhaustless endurance, his disdain of personal suffering, his dignified, commanding presence, his unfeigned humility, and his transparent sincerity for their welfare,—qualities which made an unfailing appeal to the Indian mind. Moreover, they felt his presence to be more or less of a mystical protection, for the reality of the faith he professed and sought to propagate had begun to be felt and to be more or less appreciated. They pointed out that for three years he had been preparing himself for the work of the Mission, and that it was unreasonable, now he had learned their language and their needs, to desert them. He explained that the obedience he owed to his superiors, and the duties awaiting him elsewhere allowed him no choice, but that he hoped to return and to bring with him the necessary help to teach them to know God and to serve Him. With this leave-taking, he proceeded on his anxious journey.

Conditions at Quebec were desperate, and its capitulation took place a few days after Brebeuf's arrival, the flag of France giving way to that of England. Kirke permitted the Recollet Fathers to return direct to France, but disliking the Jesuits

intensely, he took Brebeuf with him as prisoner to England. Thus was closed the third mission to Huronia, in circumstances of doubt as to the dark future, but not of despair.

During the English occupation of Quebec no missionaries could come from France, but with its recession, in 1632, prospects brightened. Champlain was again at the head of the colony, and to him, in 1633, came Fathers Brebeuf and Masse. Fathers Paul Le Jeune and Anne de Noue had come in advance, while Fathers Ambroise Davost and Antoine Daniel were on their way from Grand Cibou. Champlain never forgot his obligations to the Church. His administration at Quebec always meant missionaries in Canada. Of the six named, Brebeuf, Daniel and Davost with four *donnes* proceeded, in 1634, to Huronia. They arrived in the early fall and landed at Otouacha, on Penetanguishene Bay. They were well received. Even the children joined in the welcome, " 'Echon' s come again!" Former labours had not been in vain.

Nineteen years had passed since Le Caron said his first Mass at Carhagouha, and Huronia had not been neglected in the interval. The means at the disposal of the mission were now ample and the field was sedulously cultivated for sixteen years more. Into the details of the comings and the goings of the missionaries to and from Quebec time will not permit me to enter, but I do wish to mention the name of every member of the Mission from the beginning to the end, for each one ought to be known and held in respectful remembrance. Fathers LeMercier and Pierre Pijart, followed in 1635; Fathers Chastelain, Jogues and Garnier, in 1636; Father Paul Ragueneau in 1637; Fathers Jerome Lalemant, Francis Du Peron, Simon Le Moyne, in 1638; Fathers Chaumonot and Poncet, in 1639; Fathers Claude Pijart and Charles Raymbault, in 1640; Father Rene Menard, in 1641; Fathers Leonard Garreau and Noel Chabanel, in 1644; Father Francois Joseph Bressani, in 1645; and Fathers Gabriel Lalemant, Jacques Bonin and Adrien Daran, 1648. In all there were three Recollets and twenty-four Jesuits associated with Huronia, not including Father Poulain, a Recollet, who reached the Nipis-

sings only; and Gabriel Sagard and Adrien Greslon, who did not rank as Fathers, but as Brothers. Connected with the Mission, as a matter of course, were a number of lay brothers, *donnes*, artisans and servants, mostly of French origin, who made up the establishment at the various posts.

These posts were spread over a wide territory, and were extended from the centre as the number of missionaries increased, and as the door of opportunity opened. The sites of the native village at which mission stations existed have been fairly well identified, and their distribution shows how thoroughly the field was ministered to. From its beginning, the fourth mission—the last—was successful, so much so that dangerous opposition was stirred up by the medicine men, who saw their own religion seriously menaced and gradually supplanted. The drought, the plague, and other misfortunes were laid at the door of the Jesuits. A council of the chiefs, thereupon, condemned the missionaries to death. This fate was averted by the masterly courage of Brebeuf. “When he heard that the sentence of death was passed upon them,” says our venerable Dean Harris, “he strode fearlessly into the council-house, and, to the amazement of the chiefs, demanded to be heard. He was master of their language; and being naturally eloquent, harangued the assembly in words so forcible and persuasive as to obtain a reversal of the sentence.” The missionaries maintained their influence with the people, and conversions became numerous.

Before we follow the fortunes of Huronia further, a tribute is due to the man above all others who was responsible for the origin and success of its famous mission.

On Christmas Day, 1635, the great Champlain passed on to his earthly rest, after a busy and eventful life of sixty years. Born at Brouage, of a noble family, he studied earnestly and, while a young man, took to the sea. He rose to the command of a vessel, became a distinguished naval officer and traveler. He accompanied Pontgrave, in 1603, to Canada, and ascended the St. Lawrence as far as Hochelaga. The year following he visited Acadia, and wintered there. His close connection with Canada began in 1608, the year in which he

founded Quebec, and it continued until his death. No figure in Canadian history approaches his in romantic and practical interest. An idealist of action, a statesman, an explorer and a discoverer; a man of the highest moral courage and Christian character, of comprehensive views, and great personal charm, he won the confidence of those associated with him in the difficult tasks to which he devoted his life. He did not win the great position he attained to by arms or by military successes; he won alike the goodwill of the people whom for nigh thirty years, he governed, and the confidence of the authorities in France who had entrusted to him the important duties of his high office, because he was honourable in his dealings with both. I have more than once referred to his religious views, and it may not be unfitting to take my leave of him by quoting two of his maxims: "The salvation of one soul," he used to say, "is of more value than the conquest of an empire," and: "Kings ought not to think of extending their authority over idolatrous nations, except for the purpose of subjecting them to Jesus Christ." And McMullen adds: "While the pen of the historian can record his chequered fortunes, Champlain will never be forgotten; the waters of the beautiful lake that bears his name chant the most fitting requiem to his memory; as they break in perpetual murmurings on their shores."

It soon became necessary to reorganize the mission work, and it was decided to provide what we might call an administration building. This was carried out under the direction of Father Jerome Lalemant in 1639. A permanent central residence was erected, remote from any existing village, at a point between the south of Gloucester Bay and Mud Lake on the eastern bank of the River Wye. It was named Ste. Marie I. Five districts were constituted for missionary purposes, four of which were within Huronia and one in Petun territory. In each district, headquarters were provided and an efficient organization effected. Every Huron village was now regularly visited, and Fathers Jogues and Garnier set out on a journey to the neighbouring Petuns. The medicine men frowned on this move and spread a report that the "Black Sorcerers" had brought about the epidemic of smallpox which had decimated



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MISSIONARY TO THE HURONS.

the village of Ihonatiria (near the north point of the Penetanguishene peninsula). Every door was closed against the priests and no footing could be obtained at that time. Nevertheless, they continued their journey from village to village, making useful observations. Next year things were different and Father Garnier succeeded in founding a mission station in their midst.

Another notable missionary journey was that undertaken in 1640 by Fathers Brebeuf and Chaumonot to the Neutral country. After nine days' journey they reached the first Neutral town. They found that they had been heralded by malicious reports of their powers of evil, and of their evil intentions, chiefly that through the supernatural propagation of plague they were to destroy the people. Maledictions met them on every side and the arrow or tomahawk were withheld only because of fear. Nevertheless, some months were spent here and eighteen towns were visited in the vain endeavour to gain a hearing. They then decided to return home. On the night of their departure Brebeuf, in the act of private devotion, saw a vision of a blood-red cross in the sky moving towards him from the land of the Iroquois. "Was it large?" enquired the Fathers on his return. "Large enough to crucify us all," he replied. The premonition was not without significance in view of Brebeuf's impending martyrdom at the hands of the Iroquois. Returning from the Neutral country, he fell on the ice and broke the left clavicle. Until this was attended to, two years afterwards, by the surgeon at Quebec, he was disabled from active service.

Meanwhile, in 1641, Fathers Raymbault and Jogues visited Algonquins and Ottawas at Sault Ste. Marie and stayed with them a few weeks. They were probably the first Europeans to see Lake Superior if the claim of Etienne Brule be rejected.

Charlevoix gives an interesting account of the daily routine at the mission stations: "All their moments," he writes, "were marked by some heroic action, by conversions or by sufferings, which they considered as real indemnity when their labours had not produced all the fruit they had hoped for. From the hour of four in the morning when they rose, till

eight, they generally kept within; this was the time for prayer and the only part of the day which they had for their private exercises of devotion. At eight, each went whithersoever his duty called him; some visited the sick, others directed the husbandmen, and others visited villages destitute of pastors. No children, or at least very few, died without baptism; even adults who had refused to receive instruction while in health, applied for it when they were sick. They were not proof against the ingenious and indefatigable charity of their physicians."

The mission stations were now fairly comfortable and the more important chapels were supplied with bells. By the beginning of 1648—the year of the Iroquois invasion—the townships of Tiny, Medonte, Tay, Matchedash and North Orillia possessed flourishing missions, and Father Poncet had wintered in Manitoulin Island. There were missions among the Algonquins, the Nipissings, and the tribes on the North Shore of Lake Huron, also among the Petuns. Requests for missionaries came from Indian nations on the shores of Lake Michigan, and the great nations of the Sioux and Dakotahs to the far west seemed to be within reach of early evangelization. The number of converts continued to increase, as many as eighteen hundred having been baptized in one year.

"Inveterate prejudice was overcome, bitter hostility was changed to tender affection and the worn and faded black cassock, the cross and rosary hanging from the girdle, and the wide-brimmed hat of the Jesuit missionary became, as Withrow says, "the objects of loving regard instead of the symbols of a dreaded spiritual power. The Indians abandoned their cruel and cannibal practices. In the forest sanctuary was broken to savage neophytes the sacred bread, which crowned monarchs of Europe received from the hands of mitred priests beneath cathedral domes. Rude natures were touched to human tenderness and pity by the pathetic story of a Saviour's love; and lawless passions were restrained by the dread menace of eternal flames. Savage manners and unholy pagan rites gave way to Christian decorum and pious devo-

tion, and the implacable red men learned to pray for their enemies."

Eighteen missionaries were in constant service; additional men to help were expected soon from France, and the future was laden with roseate promise.

The lightning was about to flash and the thunder-cloud of disaster to burst. Brebeuf's vision of the blood-red cross was soon to be realized. The dread Iroquois were on the war-path. In 1647 they had whetted their appetite for carnage by the destruction of the unwary Neutrals. Their long-standing feud with the sedentary Hurons had not been forgotten and in the spring of 1648 they crossed the St. Lawrence, bent on a war of extermination. Their objective was the village of St. Joseph II., in the township of Medonte, ministered to by Father Antoine Daniel, who was the first Jesuit missionary in Huronia to receive the crown of martyrdom at their hands. The enemy had been lurking in the vicinity and taking advantage of the departure of many of the Huron braves on a hunting trip, fell on the defenceless families, burnt the village, and committed indiscriminate and cruel slaughter. Yet quite a number escaped, helped by the brave conduct of the proto-martyr. The attack was made on the fourth of July, as early Mass was being concluded in the church, which was crowded. Father Daniel, after urging his people to fly for their lives, and baptizing a number of them, by aspersion, collectively, admonished them to hold their faith till death. He then came out of the church alone and faced the Iroquois. For a moment they hesitated as if awe-struck by his courage, then flew their arrows. The charge of an arquebus at close range mercifully saved him from a death of torture. The church was set on fire and his dead body, after being stripped and mutilated, was thrown to the flames. He was forty-eight years of age and had been twelve a missionary in Huronia. The village contained about four hundred families. The slain and the captives numbered about seven hundred, and those who escaped settled near Ste. Marie I. Another village belonging to the Mission was also destroyed in this raid. Its name is unknown, but is supposed by Father Jones to have been

Ekhiondatsaan, on the trail between St. Joseph II. and Ossosane.

Nearly a year had elapsed and then the second blow fell. This time—the sixteenth of March, 1649—the Iroquois appeared about one thousand strong at Ste. Ignace II., in the township of Tay and ambushed it at early dawn, as they had done the year before at St. Joseph II. Again many of the Huron braves were absent hunting, and the surprise was complete, only three men making their escape. These fled to St. Louis, which was but a few miles distant, and gave the alarm. At the time, Fathers Brebeuf and Gabriel Lalemant happened to be at St. Louis, in passing, and the devoted people earnestly urged them to avoid the Iroquois by flight. How vain to men like these missionaries was such an appeal! They were not born to shirk; they courted the post of danger; and now that the hour had come, they were ready,—baptizing, shriving and comforting the wounded. Scarcely had the warning been given than the enemy was before the palisade, but the old men and the women and children had time to flee to shelter and safety. Only eighty warriors were left to receive the enemy. The Huron never lacked in bravery, and this handful of men put up a gallant defence. In addition to the advantage of numbers, the enemy was equipped with Dutch firearms and made short work of the forlorn hope. The two priests were among the prisoners reserved for the refinements of protracted torture, inflicted at Ste. Ignace, to which place the Iroquois returned. The agonies undergone by the Fathers were beyond belief. They have been described in all their horror by many writers deriving from Father Ragueueau's faithful account, drawn up at Ste. Marie II. from the story given by Christian Indian eyewitnesses, and confirmed by a personal examination of the charred bodies a day or two afterwards, at Ste. Ignace II., by Ragueueau himself. The remains were conveyed to Quebec, and from there to France.

The Hurons rallied their slender forces and attacked detachments of the Iroquois found near the ruined villages, but while giving new proofs of their fighting mettle, were unable to prevail over the rapidly assembled Iroquois host. Yet the

losses they inflicted caused a panic, under the influence of which the Iroquois hurriedly left Huronia for the time being. When the news of the massacres spread, deadly fear reigned everywhere, and it was decided to abandon the country. Almost immediately after the disasters referred to, fifteen villages in Huronia were deserted. The people, before leaving, set them on fire, fearing that otherwise they might be of use to the returning enemy.

Missionaries, as we have seen, had established themselves among the Petuns. Now, some of the stricken Hurons went there for protection, but the relentless Iroquois followed and the fate of the Hurons at their hands was shared by the Petuns. At the sacking there of St. Jean, Father Charles Garnier was killed; and Father Noel Chabanel, who had been for nearly a year engaged in this mission, was murdered on the following day (8th of December, 1648). He was on his way to Ste. Marie II., accompanied by a small escort, and had travelled about six leagues distant from St. Matthias when he camped for the night in the forest. The victorious whoop of the Iroquois was heard and the terrified escort vanished. Chabanel, thus deserted, proceeded until he reached the Nottawasaga River, over which he was ferried by a renegade Huron Indian who murdered him and cast his body into the river. He kept the priest's garments by means of which he afterwards proved his villainous boast. Before the martyrdom of Fathers Garnier and Chabanel had taken place, the missionaries and their people had emigrated to Christian Island, where Fort Ste. Marie II. was completed by the month of November. The winter found between six and eight thousand Hurons on Christian Island, depending on the Mission for food and shelter. The task was impossible, and much suffering was endured. The Iroquois still prowled the forests on the mainland for Huron blood. Disheartened and in despair, and confronted by inevitable famine, the nation agreed on a final dispersion, a remnant finding asylum at Quebec, others among distant tribes out of reach of the ever-pursuing, inveterate Iroquois. Thus ended, in disaster and everlasting glory the historic Mission in Huronia.

“To fight the battles of the Cross,
Christ’s chosen ones are sent—
Good soldiers, and great victors—
A noble armament.
They use no earthly weapon,
They know not spear or sword,
Yet right and true and valiant
Is the army of the Lord.” —Adelaide Proctor.

From the pen of one who loved the Indian, who knew the history of Christian missions, an esteemed author and Methodist divine, the late Rev. Dr. W. H. Withrow, came the following fair appreciation: “Nowhere did the Jesuit missionaries exhibit grander moral heroism or sublimer self-sacrifice; nowhere did they encounter greater sufferings, with more pious fortitude, or meet with a more tragical fate than in the wilderness-missions of New France. They were the pioneers of civilization, the pathfinders of empire on this continent. With breviary and crucifix, at the command of the Superior of the Society at Quebec, they wandered all over the vast country, stretching from the rocky shores of Nova Scotia to the distant prairies of the Far West, from the regions around Hudson’s Bay to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Paddling all day in their bark canoes; sleeping at night on the naked rocks; toiling over rugged portages, or through pathless forests; pinched by hunger, gnawed to the bone by cold, often dependent for subsistence on acorns, the bark of trees, or the bitter moss to which they have given their name; lodging in Indian wigwams, whose acrid smoke blinded their eyes, and whose obscene riot was unutterably loathsome to every sense; braving peril and persecution and death itself, they persevered in the path of self-sacrifice, for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the advancement of their cause, and the extension of New France.” “Not a cape was turned, not a river was entered,” writes Bancroft, “but a Jesuit led the way.”

The Huron Indian did not fall before the Iroquois because he was less brave, less courageous, or inferior in physical strength. Neither was he worsted because he was of a more

sedentary temperament than his rival, or more readily accepted the enlightened truths of Christianity. The Huron was at a fatal disadvantage because of his chimerical ideas of personal liberty which degenerated to unbridled license. He was brave, but undisciplined. He neither understood nor could he endure subordination to authority, however properly constituted. He lacked a sense of co-operation and could not succeed against the well-trained, strictly-disciplined Iroquois when the vital issue was staged on the theatre of war. It will always be so, whether in war or peace; in industrial or political struggle,—the same principle will apply. Democracy without adequate safeguards in this, our own day of assertive individualism, would represent the untamed, unpractical Huron of three centuries ago.

No one can read the story of the Huron Mission without emotion or without being impressed by its possibilities, as an historic heritage of rare value. The impression will deepen with the great, though not absolute, test of time. The source-material from which the historian will select his pigments, as well as his subject-matter, has been given to the world in worthy form from the rich treasure-house of the Jesuit Relations, and some day the importance of the bequest will be understood. The Mission will be acknowledged as a decisive event in our history and the future will demand that justice shall be done to it in our national elysium. The future is an ever-present claimant for its rights from us. The day of judgment is posterity's to-morrow. The "dies irae" of history lies in the womb of time. The great tribunal is a personified conscience apprehending the future. Therefore, the heritage value of history in a people's life is very great, and our responsibilities regarding it, not less real than are its advantages to us. The heritage is ours to make use of it ourselves and then to hand it down enriched by our experience to those who come after us. What a man inherits is not wholly his own to do with as he pleases; the gift received from the past is a life possession to be transmitted to posterity. Here lies the germ and seed of that altruism on which not only family, but national life is fundamentally established. In estimating the

value to a nation of the heritage of history, many things are to be considered. War has furnished famous battles which have been turning-points in history. Peace, also, hath her victories not less decisive, which, more deeply than war, leave their impress on the character of the people and guide the broad trend of affairs. To turn aside from the beaten track of the obvious and the spectacularly apparent, to the by-paths of life, and there to discover the silent forces which ceaselessly move on in all the complexity of their subtle processes to great achievement, is a favour from the gods. The reward is a beam from the lamp of truth, a glimpse of elusive human motives, a clearer view of the reason why. Huronia is a case in point. The strongest of all human instincts is the religious one, and if we fail to note and give full value to the religious element in our history, we fail at the most vital point. Books upon books of history prove this. Why is it that so much of our history down the centuries, and to some extent even in our time, is so unsatisfactory, so shallow, so dead? Because the deeper forces, influencing, impelling and controlling human action with the inevitable fate of destiny, have not been apprehended by the writers. The divine government of the world, carried on so largely through human instrumentality, is not given due importance; perhaps, because, sometimes the historian himself is out of harmony with the spirit of the divine life, a spirit caught, understood and exemplified in life and death by the martyr-actors who played their part in the great drama of Huronia.



IDENTIFICATION OF HURON VILLAGE SITES IN TAY TOWNSHIP BY A. E. JONES S.J.

- Township line.
- Old shore line higher level.
- Old shore line higher level.
- Indian Village Sites
- Present Villages and hamlets.
- XII Concessions.
- I-IT-113L.ots.
- Gravel.

Scale of Miles

